



#### Information You Can Use:

**Fair Housing** Call toll-free 1(800) 669-9777 or click here to file a claim on-line.

**FHA Resource Center** Call (800) CALL-FHA or (800)225-5342

**Forbearance** Obama administration offers additional mortgage relief to unemployed homeowners

**Find Your Local Public Housing Agency (PHA)** or Call HUD's interactive voice system for a HUD approved housing counseling agency near you at (800) 569-4287.

**Foreclosure Prevention:** HUD approved housing counselors offer guidance on default and foreclosure prevention. Search online for a housing counseling agency near you, or call HUD's interactive voice system at: (800) 569-4287.

**HUD Press Releases** are located on the main page on [www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov) under "Press Releases."

**Learn more about renting and HUD rental assistance programs** or call HUD's interactive voice system for a HUD-approved housing counseling agency near you at: (800) 569-4287.

**Public Housing and Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8)** To apply for either type of help, visit your local Public Housing Agency (PHA).

**Sustainable Communities, Partnerships, and Grants** Learn more about partnerships, programs, and grants for community stabilization.

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#### Greetings,

It has been almost fourteen months since my appointment as the HUD Region IV Regional Administrator and I want to thank you for your support. My goal continues to be to improve the lines of open communications between us especially when it comes to important announcements and programs that help those we serve.

Foreclosures in the Southeast Region continue to be of concern and it is vital to ensure that our constituents know about free [HUD certified Housing Counseling](#) foreclosure assistance. In addition to this program the Administration recently announced a new program.

The [new program](#) is part of the Administration's and HUD's strategy to innovatively support eligible homeowners facing foreclosure to stay in their homes. The [Obama Administration and HUD announced](#) on July 7th adjustments to the Federal Housing Administration requirements that will require servicers to extend the forbearance period for unemployed homeowners to 12 months.

The Administration also intends to require servicers participating in the [Making Home Affordable Program](#) to extend the minimum forbearance period to 12 months wherever possible under regulator and investor guidelines.

Providing the option for a year of forbearance will give struggling homeowners a substantially greater chance of finding employment before they lose their home.

We continue to address the housing challenges facing our constituents and appreciate your continued partnership in that effort as we collaboratively work for the common good of those that need our help most.

Sincerely,

Ed Jennings, Jr.  
HUD Region IV  
Regional Administrator

#### Housing: A More Hopeful Prognosis

Families in the Southeast have begun to emerge from the storm in the housing market. Every single state in our region was impacted, and it has taken a multi-thronged approach to make a sustainable effort to assist our constituents. We are pleased to report that combined efforts to support responsible homeowners, stabilize communities and lend a hand to organizations willing to help are starting to show results.

Efforts to assist our communities have been through collective work with our federal, state, local and private sector partners. Here in our Southeast Region, eight of the 17 states were identified as hardest-hit by foreclosures included in the HUD/Treasury Hardest Hit Fund. Additionally, Puerto Rico was eligible for the Emergency Homeowners Loan Program; and three rounds of Neighborhood Stabilization (NSP) funding have reached the area as part of the \$7 billion provided to communities around the country.

Through our "First Look" partnership, we're working with key financial institutions and advocates to ensure that those funds are targeted to places with the greatest need. First Look gives NSP grantees an exclusive 12-to-14 day window to evaluate and bid on properties before others can do so -- maximizing the impact of NSP dollars in our hardest-hit neighborhoods, making it more likely the properties communities want to buy are strategically chosen and cutting the time it takes to re-sell foreclosed properties in half.

All told, we expect NSP will impact 100,000 properties in the nation's hardest-hit markets -- properties that make up 20 percent of the REO in NSP-targeted areas. Last year alone, our partner, the National Community Stabilization Trust, gave communities an exclusive window to purchase 70,000 REO properties -- helping 188 communities access REO properties and save over \$26 million in taxpayer funds, an average discount of nearly 13 percent per property.

We've worked with the Treasury Department to improve the "Making Home Affordable" program to help troubled borrowers -- and while there's no doubt that the Home Affordable Modification Program (HAMP) has helped fewer people than we'd initially hoped, let's be clear: it *has* made a difference. Our latest scorecard shows that more than 730,000 families have had their mortgages permanently modified by HAMP. Together, HAMP and FHA's loss mitigation programs have set a standard for mortgage modification efforts that the private market has scaled up.

Nearly five million families have received restructured mortgages since April 2009 -- more than twice the number of foreclosures completed in that time. Of course, for these efforts to make the biggest possible difference, families need to be able to access them. Over the last two years, HUD-approved housing counselors have helped 6 million distressed homeowners. According to NeighborWorks America, distressed homeowners working with a housing counselor are nearly twice as likely to receive a modification on their mortgage.

Cognizant of the hard environment to regain work and enough income to sustain homeownership, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) also implemented a special forbearance program requiring its lenders to go the extra mile in helping un- or underemployed borrowers who are at least three months behind in their mortgage to extend it from four to 12 months. This means certain unemployed borrowers with FHA-insured mortgages may have up to a full year to find work and get back on their financial feet.

While fending off foreclosures, many families were also ready to buy. Over the last three years, FHA's market share increased significantly, helping those in need, especially those with low incomes and homeowners from minority communities. The most recent data shows that 60 percent of all African-American and Hispanic homebuyers purchase homes with FHA financing. During that time, FHA has helped over 2 million families buy a home--80 percent of whom were first-time buyers.

At every local level, HUD offices are actively working to increase awareness and provide technical assistance to those using HUD funds. The agency has engaged in providing workshops to promote acquisition and reuse of foreclosed properties; outreach to underserved communities and offering state of the art mapping and property management tools.

If you would like to access the most comprehensive housing data, please visit our [Housing Market Conditions](#).

#### HUD Renders Much Needed Disaster Assistance in Hard Hit States of Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina and Tennessee

HUD is committed to making its resources available to support disaster recovery efforts in [Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina](#) and [Tennessee](#). While in some states the disaster may be winding down HUD remains focused and committed to supporting these efforts as much as possible. HUD is providing flexibility to local governments to align existing HUD funding with critical current community needs.

The HUD regional staff remains available to work with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) entitlement communities to re-allocate existing funding for recovery efforts, and where requested and needed HUD has approved waivers or other post-disaster flexibilities to expedite these efforts. Also we want to ensure that homeowners with FHA backed loans have the flexibility and time to recover from the disaster and avoid default. Consequently, HUD issued post-disaster foreclosure moratoriums. HUD also made available Section 203(k) Rehabilitation Mortgage Insurance to repair damaged homes and Section 203(h) Mortgage Insurance for disaster survivors which includes 100% financing with no down-payment for rebuilding or replacing a home destroyed by a disaster.

"We are committed to making HUD's resources available to support your recovery efforts," said HUD Southeast Regional Administrator Ed Jennings, Jr. "Our program offices have provided important waivers and flexibilities to grantees across impacted states and we have worked closely with FEMA to rehouse families where we have available inventories."

HUD continues to strive to ensure that all HUD families have a permanent housing solution and the support they need to recover from the disaster is a priority. Shortages in HUD vacancies, tight housing markets in some areas and resident preferences to stay in or near their impacted community have made re-housing HUD clients challenging but not impossible.

In most cases neighboring PHAs and Multi-Family owners / operators have extended their resources and support to assist these families. HUD is concerned about post-disaster spikes in homelessness and what this might mean for long-term homelessness in your communities. Know that HUD, our homeless subject matter experts in the Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs (SNAPs), and Continuum of Care Providers (CoC) are focused on this issue and ready to assist.

We are actively supporting the federal inter-agency response across impacted states and stand ready to assist. HUD is currently working under six Mission Assignments from FEMA to provide subject matter experts across impacted states. Over the last couple of months, HUD provided staff to work in Joint Field Offices (JFOs) and Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC) to assist displaced families and coordinate efforts with FEMA. Most of these efforts are winding down as DRCs close in each state.

HUD is here to help you and your communities recover. If there is anything that we can do to help please feel free to have your office contact the [state HUD Field Office Director](#) and for the State of Georgia please contact Mr. Tony Hebert at [tony.x.hebert@hud.gov](mailto:tony.x.hebert@hud.gov) or call 678-732-2075.

#### Strong Cities, Strong Communities: An Urban Economic Policy for the 21st Century

A few decades ago we were wondering, "Will the last person leaving Seattle turn out the lights?" Forty years later, we know that one-industry aerospace town, which had relied on Boeing for its economic health, rebounded from the 60,000 jobs that company lost during four years -- transforming into the home of Microsoft, Amazon and Starbucks, a community with a trans-portion system that gives virtually every family in the region access to jobs and opportunity.

Seattle wasn't alone in this resurgence. Pittsburgh watched as its largest mill shuttered its doors in 1984. Today, Pittsburgh is considered the most livable city in America. Boston endured a brutal transition that began in the 1960s as it went from being the hub of New England's shoe and textile business to a global center of financial management, education, and advanced elec-tronics.

These communities diversified their economies, educated their workforces and exported goods. They committed to broadly shared prosperity. And they worked closely with new partners -- the private sector, and the "Third Sector" of philanthropy and non-profits. Our metropolitan areas are where 85 percent of jobs are located and more than 8-in-10 residents live. Our metros produce over 80 percent of the nation's patents and exports, and 90 cents out of every dollar America produces come from them. We need cities. What do they need? Specifically, what do cities need that only the Federal government can provide?

There are three fundamental things about cities that reflect the lessons of the last century: Every city needs a federal partner that understands that one size doesn't fit all -- and that it never will. Being a good partner isn't just about seeing problems -- it's also about recognizing opportunities. And, no city can succeed without strong local leadership and institutional capacity.

"[Strong Cities, Strong Communities](#)" is a pilot initiative in six cities and regions: Memphis, Cleveland, New Orleans, Chester, Pennsylvania, Fresno, California, and Detroit. These cities were chosen from the compeltive Strong Cities Strong Communities Challenge to develop and implement economic developing strategy plans. With the help of the Economic Development Administration, these cities will undergo a new economic planning challenge by using funding to plan and implement ways to address severe population loss and long-term economic decline; high levels of poverty and unemployment; and low property values and deteriorating infrastructure.

Just as important is the assets they bring. For instance, in response to losing the competition with neighboring states to attract relocating businesses, Memphis Mayor AC Wharton built a strong relationship with Shelby County Mayor Mark Luttrell to create the Economic Development Growth Engine --or "EDGE"--which merged seven public offices under a single roof so that they can compete regionally.

The pilot is designed to capitalize on these local efforts and assets by strengthening the capacity of local institutions in three fundamental ways: By improving the way Federal government does business, by providing assistance and support, not mandates, and, by partnering for growth.

With a new kind of federal partner, we believe cities facing chronic challenges can begin to transform themselves -- not into the one-industry power centers of the past, but into the hubs of the dynamic, diverse, resilient, regional economies America needs to create millions of jobs and win the future. For more details on this pilot program visit [HUD's website](#).